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HERE COME THE ARM-TWISTERS

"What joy have I in June's return?" somberly inquired the English poet Thomas Hood. Hundreds of federal employees might well be wishing they'd said that—for this is the month of the annual Democratic touch.

The occasion is the Congressional dinner on June 24, for which 6,000 party faithfuls shell out \$100 for steak and oratory, the ample proceeds going into the party's congressional campaign war chests.

Lobbyists, as always at political functions, pick up their share of tickets, but the most lucrative market is the mass of government workers here, especially the political appointees. In the arm-twisters' uncluttered view, bureaucrats owe livelihood and future promotions to the Administration.

The dinner was postponed from June 3. Stated reason: the later date better suited President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey's schedules. Unstated reason: ticket sales were miserable. High-level representatives of federal agencies and departments met in the White House to hear pointed sales exhortations from Democratic National Committee officials. Thousands of letters were mailed out to federal workers at their homes—one man from the State Department got five, all alike.

The obvious—but illegal—place to reach federal employees is at work, where they constitute a captive audience. The laws against political solicitations on U.S. property and time have been somewhat limply enforced in the past. In last year's ticket sale, however, things got out of hand at the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Justice Department stepped in. That investigation is still going on, and sales pressures are correspondingly more subtle. Solicitations from department heads have taken the form of pointed "invitations" to cocktail parties—before the dinner. Even so, there are rebels. Over at State, Undersecretary Thomas Mann became something of a hero

when he quietly disclosed that he wasn't going to the dinner and assured subordinates that their careers would not hang in the balance if they were to follow suit.

LIMITED WAR ON McNAMARA

All those computers and "flow charts" that Robert McNamara brought with him into the Pentagon left little room for the sort of budgetary jockeying that historically has endeared congressmen to the folks back home. Considerations such as where and which military bases are to be built and razed, how much soldiers' pay shall be increased, what shall befall the hometown National Guard—all decisions once cozily made in the most closed of committee sessions—now are largely determined by McNamara's slide-rule techniques.

Many congressmen wailed and gnashed teeth, but from the start the Defense Secretary stood firm in the esteem of the venerable Carl Vinson, powerful chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. This, plus McNamara's acknowledged personal brilliance got his defense budgets past the House pretty much intact. Last year, however, Carl Vinson left Congress, and with him went McNamara's immunity from attack.

Vinson's successor, Mendel Rivers (Dem., S.C.), has declared, with drill-sergeant bluntness, that he believes Congress has allowed the executive branch to usurp its Constitution-given obligations. The white-maned South Carolinian claims he and his colleagues first learned of the recent closing of military bases only by reading the newspapers. "If we authorize a military base," Rivers says, "when it comes time to close it, we ought to be in on it."

Military pay also is an area where Rivers and McNamara "don't see eye to eye." Rivers wants to boost it far higher than McNamara does. The White House set a study panel to work on the question, but it came up with a compromise proposal that falls on McNamara's side of the gap. Says Rivers of the proposal: "I don't think the Congress wants to do that."

"McNamara and I are getting along better every day," draws Rivers, "and the sooner he understands where our responsibility ends and his begins, the better."

The other day, Rivers interrupted a McNamara committee briefing which the chairman felt was patronizing and lacking in candor.

"Carl Vinson has gone," Rivers told the angrily flushing McNamara. "He's gone, Mr. Secretary. Carl Vinson has gone."

RUCKUS OVER GREEN BERETS

A new book, *The Green Berets*, by Robin Moore, is rattling windows at the Pentagon. It is about the American Special Forces in Vietnam.

The book is crammed with passages which, if based on fact, would amount to sensational disclosures: Special Forces penetrating into Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam; cowardice and corruption among the South Vietnamese officers; undercover CIA-directed support of mountain tribesmen fighting Communists in Laos.

Yet, though he trained with the Special Forces and spent six months with them in South Vietnam, Moore calls his book fiction. Privately, the Defense Department is greatly worried that Moore has violated national security by too thinly disguising some classified facts about the Vietnam war. After phone calls from the Pentagon, Crown Publishers agreed to put on every book a paper band stating: "Fiction stranger than fact! Here, in a unique work of narration, are fictitious stories behind the factual story in Southeast Asia . . ."

Moore hotly denies the suggestion that he had access to secret or classi-

fied information. "All I know is what I saw," he insists. "And I made some pretty shrewd guesses."

Nonetheless, he came to Washington last month and promised, after a secret briefing in the Pentagon, to avoid any elaboration on 16 sensitive passages in the book—including one entire chapter. Meanwhile, the ruckus hasn't hurt book sales.

A PEEVE ON THE PODIUM

As much a part of all White House parties as the presidential reception line is the scarlet-coated U.S. Marine Corps Band—"the President's own." Its *Hail to the Chief* can raise goose bumps on the most cynical guest. But recently the band's 52-year-old director, Lt. Colonel Albert Schoepper, has hit some sour notes with the White House social office.

It began during the state dinner for visiting Italian Premier Aldo Moro in April. The full 24-piece band tootled in the East Room, as usual, before and during the meal. Afterward, a 7-piece ensemble was to remain and accompany Lyndon Johnson's favorite indoor sport—dancing. Signals got crossed and guests ambled back from the dining room before non-ensemble bandsmen could finish packing their gear and make their escape.

White House Social Secretary Bess Abell, a highly efficient and strong-willed lady—it was she whose taste decreed that domestic wines would be served at White House functions—did not want the musicians clattering their paraphernalia then; nor did she want empty chairs left on the bandstand. At Mrs. Abell's insistence, the whole band stayed—all but the ensemble sitting silently, unused instruments in laps, a form of enforced featherbedding obviously distasteful to Schoepper, who wielded the baton all evening.

Schoepper and two assistants used to take turns at White House parties. Since the Moro party, he has sent only his assistants to conduct, and this led to a rumor that he had either stalked off, or been drummed off, the podium. But the White House is trying to patch things up, and the colonel, who has performed for five Presidents and more kings than he can remember, is expected back any party now.

The gathering was the new Republican policy coordinating committee, met to discuss a new image and how to rise from one's ashes. Among those present were Barry Goldwater (left), Sen. Everett Dirksen, former President

Eisenhower, Rep. Les Arends, Richard Nixon and Thomas E. Dewey. The group broke up after arriving at what one member edgily called a "split-level consensus." No one could recall what Ev and Ike found to laugh at.

